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UNCLAS KUWAIT 000569

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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION FEB 17-18: AL-HURRA SATELLITE CHANNEL, MEPI, IRAQ

[1](#)1. "A New Satellite Channel"

Dr. Ahmed Al-Rubei, former MP and liberal columnist wrote in independent Al-Qabas (2/17): "The launch of Al-Hurra satellite channel elicited angry reactions and was labeled an American conspiracy by many Arab news media. This reaction is naive and clear sign of an overwrought mindset. In an age where technology reigns, and where Arab satellite channels are in regress, Al-Hurra can succeed only if it does not become the mouthpiece of American foreign policy. Only if Al-Hurra conducts a healthy and impartial dialogue where all opinions are presented, then perhaps it can open the door for objective analysis and fair competition. Self-Confident nations must look on such an event as an addition of a new color to the spectrum of the colors of freedom."

[1](#)2. "Rich and Poor"

Fouad Al-Hashem wrote in independent Al-Watan (2/17): "I predict within one year, the newly launched Al-Hurra satellite channel, will best seventy five percent of all current Arab satellite channels. The finest endorsement for the new channel was articulated when a female employee said she worked at numerous media outlets, but now working at Al-Hurra she was free of the censor."

[1](#)3. "Do Not Underestimate the Power of Media"

Sami Abdul Latif Al-Nisif wrote in independent Al-Anba (2/18): "In the view of many Arabs, the launch of the new satellite channel Al-Hurra is the first step in correcting decades of accumulated grievances created by America the "Great Satan". Not only can Al-Hurra pull the rug out from under the rest of the Arab satellite channels, but also, it can correct many misconceptions on American foreign policy toward the region and perhaps end the tension."

[1](#)4. "A reading . Into an International Plan"

Dr. Mohammed Al-Rumaih wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-A'am (2/17): "On several occasions, president Bush and foreign secretary Powell spoke of MEPI and both hoped Western states

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would adopt MEPI as a future working plan toward the Middle East. The philosophy behind this project lies in that instability in the Middle East is threatening the interests of countries such as the United States, and this instability is due to a failure in the development in the Arab world. Most significantly, many Western decision makers believe that Arab leaders are using the unresolved Palestinian problem as a pretext to delay reforms. MEPI plan in general focuses on education, and many of its elements are beneficial and welcome. It is what MEPI fails to mention that is much more significant."

[1](#)5. "Iraqis Electrocuted"

Faisal Al-Zamil wrote in independent Al-Anba (2/18): "It seems Paul Bremer and the Coalition Authority are releasing persons linked to the former Iraqi regime, the same people who tormented the Iraqi people. Many Iraqis were right to be suspicious of America's motives. How can we comprehend the reason behind the release of Saadoun Hamadi and Mohammed Al-Sahaf, who committed crimes against Iraqis and led them into pointless wars, while hundreds of Guantanamo detainees continue to be incarcerated only on reason of suspicion? This silly charade of releasing war criminals, and classifying their leader [Saddam Hussein] a Prisoner of War is a serious turning point which even the families of American soldiers are now questioning."

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